

(b) and (c) There is no current maximum limit on trade between India and China.

Welfare of Virginia tobacco growers in A.P.

1485. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government have any census of the economic state and welfare of Virginia tobacco farmers of Andhra Pradesh;
- (b) if so, whether the Tobacco Board has been involved in this exercise;
- (c) how many farmers have sought permission to grow more tobacco;
- (d) whether Government granted this permission; and
- (e) the steps proposed to improve income of tobacco farmers of Andhra Pradesh?.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (b) No, Sir. The Tobacco Board has not taken up any such exercise.

- (c) The FCV tobacco farmers of AP requested for increase in the crop size fixed initially by the Tobacco Board for 2006-07 AP crop season.
- (d) On consideration of the request of AP FCV tobacco farmers, the crop size of 2006-07 AP crop season has been increased from 129.12 Mkg to 150 Mkg inclusive of 10% quantity as nature's bounty
- (e) The Tobacco Board provides assistance to tobacco farmers through various Extension & Development schemes for improving the quality and production of tobacco in tune with the changing international demand and quality. The Board extends subsidy from 25% to 50% to the growers under various schemes such as Farm Mechanization, Integrated Pest Management, Energy conservation measures like fixing venturi furnaces to Barns and Roof Insulation to the Barns etc. The Board also helps farmers in construction of mini check dams/farm ponds for irrigation of tobacco crops and arranges input loans & crop loans.